

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS
OF THE UNITED STATES
FOUNDED 1899



JOHN FURGESS
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

VFW MEMORIAL BUILDING
200 MARYLAND AVENUE, NE
WASHINGTON, DC 20002-5799

March 30, 2005

The Honorable Gordon R. England
Secretary of the Navy
1000 Navy Pentagon
Washington, DC 20350-1000

Dear Secretary England:

On behalf of the 2.4 million members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. and our Auxiliaries, I respectfully request that you consider the posthumous award of the Medal of Honor to Army Air Force Lieutenant Rex T. Barber, pursuant to section 1130 of Title 10, United States Code.

On April 18, 1943, Barber was attached to Marine Corps Fighter Command when he and three other P-38 Lightning pilots flew more than 400 miles at wave-top heights from their base on Guadalcanal to Bougainville. Their secret mission was to intercept an aircraft carrying Adm. Isoroku Yamamoto, the commander of the Imperial Japanese Navy and chief architect of the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Barber was credited with shooting down one fighter escort and the bomber aircraft that carried the admiral and his senior staff. He was originally recommended for the Medal of Honor, but due to intelligence community concerns, he was awarded the Navy Cross instead.

Our intelligence-gathering capabilities have been well publicized since the end of World War II. It's past time to reconsider him for our nation's highest military award. His single accomplishment dealt a paralyzing blow to Japanese morale by depriving them of one of their greatest military leaders. This helped hasten an end to the war in the Pacific which saved countless lives on both sides.

Last August at our national convention in Cincinnati, the VFW unanimously approved a resolution to support the award of this nation's highest military medal to Rex T. Barber, who was a life member of our organization when he passed away at his home in Terrebonne in 2001.

Should you require any additional information, please have your staff contact Robert E. Wallace, Executive Director of the VFW Washington Office, at 202-543-2239.

Very Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John Furgess".

JOHN FURGESS
Commander-in-Chief